

## Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 PM-05

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12 DODE-00 /082 W

-----034212 021851Z /50

P R 021300Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9993

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 2206

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA MARR MA UR PARM XO

SUBJ: SOVIET RELATIONS WITH DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR  
(DRM)

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 17316, (B) STATE 284901, (C) STATE 285874,

(D) ANT 1900, (E) ANT 2092, (F) ANT A-034

1. SUMMARY. DRM HAS REPORTEDLY REJECTED A RENEWED SOVIET  
REQUEST FOR BASE FACILITIES AT DIEGO SUAREZ. THERE ARE  
BEGINNING TO BE HINTS OF MALAGASY DISENCHANTMENT WITH SOVIET  
RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR HUNT CONFIRMED TO ME ON DECEMBER 2 THAT HE  
HAD REPORT THAT SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY RENEWED A PREVIOUS DEMAND  
FOR BASING PRIVILEGES IN DIEGO SUAREZ. LIKE HIS COUNTERPART IN  
MOSCOW (REF A), HE DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY HOW OR  
WHEN THE APPROACH WAS MADE BUT SAID IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN THE USSR  
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TO THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (SRC)  
WHO ATTENDED THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES OF THE OCTOBER  
REVOLUTION. THESE TWO REPRESENTATIVES WERE CHARLES RAVOAJANAHARY,  
DEAN OF THE SRC AND REPORTEDLY A CLOSE ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT  
RATSIRAKA, AND RICHARD ANDRIAMANJATO, FORMER MAYOR OF ANTANANARIVO  
AND LEADER OF THE PRO-SOVIET AKFM PARTY. ACCORDING TO HUNT BOTH  
THESE MEN WERE EMPOWERED BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW TO

HOLD SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES. HUNT DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT SOVIET REQUEST MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE BY ROVING SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVITCH DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO MADAGASCAR (REF B), BUT SAID THAT HE HAD UNDERSTOOD LATTER HAD BEEN SIMPLY TOURING THIS AREA TO INFORM VISITED COUNTRIES ABOUT PROGRESS OF US/SOVIET DISCUSSIONS ON INDIAN OCEAN. IN FACT, RATSIRAKA HAD COMMENTED TO VISITING FRENCH DELEGATION THAT ALL HE HEARD ABOUT THESE TALKS WAS FROM SOVIETS (COMMENT: APPARENTLY DISREGARDING OR UNAWARE OF FACT THAT I HAVE KEPT FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMED AND EVEN DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH PRIME MINISTER (REF D)). I WILL TRY TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENDELEVITCH VISIT BUT DOUBT THAT DRM OFFICIALS WILL BE ABLE TO SUPPLY MUCH MORE.

3. IF FRENCH REPORT IS CORRECT, NAMELY THAT SUCH A NEW SOVIET APPROACH HAS BEEN MADE AND REBUFFED, IT WOULD BEAR OUT OUR VERY TENTATIVE CONCLUSION, MADE IN REF E, THAT WARINESS OF THE SOVIETS, POSSIBLY INCREASED BY RECENT EVENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, AND CONCERN ABOUT INTERNAL REPERCUSSIONS, WOULD CARRY THE DAY WITH RATSIRAKA IN THE MATTER OF DIEGO SUAREZ, OVER HIS IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND OVER ANY INDUCEMENTS THE SOVIETS MIGHT OFFER. IN FACT, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE MALAGASIES MAY BE GROWING AWARE OF THE LIMITATION IN THE BENEFITS WHICH CAN ACCRUE TO MADAGASCAR FROM COOPERATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER

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COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. AS SET FORTH IN REF F, THE SOVIET AND CHINESE AID TOTALS, ALTHOUGH WIDELY PUBLICIZED, DO NOT MATCH THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WESTERN AID DONORS AND THEIR PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY SLOW IN IMPLEMENTATION DUE TO SOME SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS. IN RECENT DAYS THERE HAS BEEN MUCH ATTENTION GIVEN TO A FRANCO-MALAGASY MEETING IN ANTANANARIVO (SEE SEPTELS) WHICH MAY RESULT IN FRENCH AID ALONE ATTAINING AN ANNUAL LEVEL OF \$30 MILLION IN 1978. COMPARISONS OF WESTERN AND SOCIALIST AID, ALTHOUGH MADE DIFFICULT BY THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE LATTER, FAVOR THE FORMER.

4. FURTHERMORE, SOME LESS FAVORABLE ASPECTS OF SOVIET DEMEANOR ARE DRAWING INCREASING ATTENTION. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY SOVIET VISITORS THIS YEAR, INCLUDING TWO SOCCER TEAMS AND A BASKETBALL TEAM. THE ATHLETES HAVE BEEN QUITE DEMANDING ON THE SUBJECTS OF ACCOMMODATIONS AND SPENDING MONEY, WHICH ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOST COUNTRY TO FURNISH, EVEN ASKING IF IT COULD NOT BE PAID TO THEM IN CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY. NEGOTIATORS ON AID PROJECTS ARE SAID TO BE DEMANDING AND UNYIELDING. "AND," A WORKING LEVEL NEGOTIATOR TOLD US, "WHEN WE DON'T ACCEPT ALL OF THEIR DEMANDS, THEY GO TO SEE RATSIRAKA AND COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR LACK OF COOPERATIVE-

NESS." THIS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR  
HIMSELF. ALEXANDER ALEXEYEV, NORMALLY A CHEERFUL TEDDYBEAR  
OF A MAN, HAS LATELY BEEN HEARD TO GRUMBLE THAT THE MALAGASIES  
ARE SO DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THAT HE CAN'T GET ANYTHING DONE  
WITHOUT GOING TO SEE RATSIRAKA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE DRM DOES NOT APPRECIATE THIS.BARRETT

NOTE BY OC/T: REFERENCE (B) APPEARS TO BE INCORRECT.

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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